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ABSTRACT

An assessment is made of the scope of music education, including dance and opera, in junior colleges during the 1969-70 academic year. A questionnaire was mailed to the chairmen of music departments in 200 2-year colleges. Of the 154 who responded, 109 reported accredited transfer music programs and 29 reported offering music courses and experiences of a non-transfer type. The schools surveyed supplied information on music education in the following areas: (1) number and variety of course offerings; (2) total enrollment in music courses; (3) education, experience and status of music faculty; and (4) extent of non-credit, community-service music events. (CA)

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Music Curricula in the Junior Colleges

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JC 710 149

* Appreciation is expressed to Velda Stokke, Graduate Assistant, for her part in the project

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
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INFORMATION

In the last decade, the phenomenal growth in the number of two-year colleges and the great influx of students have posed some serious questions regarding the content of the education offered. When many junior colleges were viewed as "way stations" to the universities, the curriculum emphasized the traditional liberal arts. Now, most of the new two-year colleges are "community" colleges--publicly funded and governed, serving local residents of all ages and geared to providing immediately usable skills in vocations where there is a critical manpower shortage in the surrounding region. Thus the two-year college is under a pressing challenge to be relevant and responsive to its community while it is still groping its way into existence. How much of the traditional curriculum can survive, faced with this requirement, and how much change can it withstand if change is necessary?

Music, as much as any other program, faces the challenges of re-examining its role, revamping its image and expanding its services if it intends to remain consistent with the philosophy of community colleges. Part-time, occupationally oriented, often terminating their education after two years, the students at community colleges need something different from the music offerings at four-year colleges, if indeed they need and want music at all. At the same time, the general public usually expects to participate in the activities of the college, especially cultural activities.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to assess the present scope of music education, including dance and opera, in junior/community colleges. A questionnaire was designed and mailed to the chairmen of Music Departments in 200 two-year colleges, randomly selected from the listings in The Directory of Junior Colleges, 1969. Of the 154 respondents, 109 reported accredited transfer music programs (designated T) and 29 offered music courses and experiences of a non-transfer type (designated NT). The remaining schools either offered no music at all or were in the process of expanding to four-year institutions. This resulted in 138 useable returns.

The returns suggest that the sample is a fair randomization of two-year colleges in the United States. Fifty-seven schcols had student bodies under 1,000. Sixty of the responding institutions had enrollments between 1,000 and 5,000 and 21 reported over 5,000 students in attendance. Similarly, 64 colleges were in the Plains states, 32 came from Pacific states, 23 from the South, 13 from the Middle Atlantic and six located in New England. In all, 46 of the 50 states are represented in the study.

The schools surveyed supplied information on music education in four broad areas: (1) number and variety of course offerings; (2) total enrollment in music courses; (3) education, experience and status of music faculty; and (4) extent of noncredit, community-service types of music events. The data reflect the status of music education in two-year colleges during the academic year 1969-1970.

Curriculum

The bulk of the course offerings in both T and NT schools is in the areas of beginning Music Theory, Ear Training I & II and Music Appreciation I, followed fairly closely by vocal and instrumental performance instruction for soloists and for groups. One hundred and eight of the T schools and 20 of the NT schools offer Music Appreciation I. Music Theory I - IV and Ear Training I - IV in the T schools appear to be the broadest offerings of specialized courses, with at least 50 per cent of the institutions providing advanced training. Courses of a specialized nature drop off sharply in the NT schools after the elementary level.

The figures for T schools and NT schools are quite high for Voice I (85 per cent and 41 per cent) and Voice II (83 per cent and 41 per cent), then decrease almost by half for Voice III and IV. A similar pattern was obtained for Piano I (91 per cent and 34 per cent) and Piano II (84 per cent and 37 per cent), with the same tendency for enrollment to taper off for Piano III and IV. Thirty-seven per cent of the T schools offer classes in brass instruments; 38 per cent, woodwinds; 25 per cent, percussion; and 26 per cent, strings. Only a tiny fraction of the NT colleges teach these subjects and neither type of institution offered much for the student interested in the organ.

Surprisingly, very few T schools have courses in music education; 36 of the 109 offer elementary music but only six give pre-school courses, four have conducting classes and one

has a secondary school music course. Only two NT schools have any classes at all in this area.

The overall conclusion one can draw from this sampling is that NT schools provide very little in the way of musical instruction, either for the purpose of broadening their students' intellectual horizons or to provide marketable skills. In every category, the T schools offered a greater variety of courses and greater depth in each subject area, although here, too, there appears much room for improvement, if the emphasis is to be on useful education .

In terms of enrollment, music certainly has a place at two-year colleges. Approximately 30,644 students at the 138 responding schools are involved in some kind of music program. Of these, 1,994 (6.5 per cent), are majoring in vocal or instrumental music and an additional 1,643 (5.4 per cent) pursue music as a minor. In schools of comparable size, the departments which give transfer credit have a consistently higher average number of students in music courses than the non-transfer departments.

The 109 T schools faculty reported 505 music faculty, with a heavy emphasis on instrumental music instructors (150 part-time and 138 full-time) and vocal music instructors (82 part-time and 102 full-time). The remaining few instructors are assigned solely to appreciation, theory and/or humanities courses.

The faculty were drawn from varied backgrounds. Private instructors accounted for 301 (59.6 percent), 254 (50.2 per cent) had been or were professional performers, and 248 (49.1 percent)

had also taught in secondary schools, with some obvious overlapping. Most of the faculty had substantial teaching experience--only 29 (5.7 per cent) were in their first year. The rest were evenly distributed in experience: 106 had one to five years' experience, 105 had taught between six and 10 years, 106 had spent 11 to 15 years teaching and 113 were veterns of more than 15 years. Some 46 instructors did not submit their experiential backgrounds for analysis.

Their academic preparation was also fairly extensive: nearly nine per cent held doctorates; over 68 per cent had earned Master's Degrees, often with additional credits; and 18 per cent had Bachelor's Degrees or better. Only 21 did not have a degree from a four-year college.

In the 29 institutions offering music of a nontransfer veriety, the 62 instructors had very similar backgrounds, assignments and length of teaching experience. Even in preparation, the returns paralleled, with percentages of three per cent holding doctorates, 73 per cent with Master's,16 per cent having B.A's and 8 per cent without degrees.

Nearly 90 per cent of the two-year colleges pay their music faculties on the same basis as all other faculty. In several cases, however, the Department Chairmen had no information on the pay scales in other departments. One school replied that members of the Music Department received higher salaries.

Community Service

An impressive 85 per cent of all colleges answering the questionnaire reported at least one musical program directed

at the community. The NT schools fall slightly behind the T schools in this regard--16.5 per cent of the T schools report no benefits to their communities in the form of concerts, community choruses and the like, compared with 19 per cent of the NT schools. As might be expected, the larger the college, the greater the likelihood of music programs aimed at the general public although the largest NT school in the sample (over 10,000 students) cited no public musical events.

The most common joint activity or performance was the community chorus (44 per cent), following by concerts (43 per cent), appreciation courses (36 per cent), symphonies (32 per cent), musicals (20 per cent), bands (17 per cent), jazz bands and chamber groups (eight per cent), ballet (7 per cent) and opera (six per cent).

Certainly it can be said that most junior/community colleges are trying hard to meet their obligations to provide educational and cultural experiences to the whole community, and are succeeding in this aspect of the field of music.

A Question of Goals

On the whole, however, two-year colleges have not settled the discrepancies between their own goals and those of four-year colleges regarding music. This is brought out by the huge grab-bag of specialized courses which one college or another lists in its catalogue-- courses in the history of jazz, music literature, composition, keyboard harmony, trios, quartets, sextets, octets for men or women, etc. Apart from students majoring or minoring

in music, less than 10 per cent of the music students took any course beyond the introductory level. True, some of the elementary courses may lead to a deeper interest, but for a two year college, even if many students decided to go on to a university the curricula seem to have no particular foci. Instead, it appears that many are trying very hard to compact four years of music education into two years.